

Gigi

Marie Madeleine is the foundress of the FCJ Sisters. She founded the FCJ sisters (Faithful Companions of Jesus) in 1920, so exactly 200 years ago. She was born in a noble family shortly before the French Revolution, grew up and married a wealthy man. No one then would have thought she would start a group of religious sisters but life took some twists and turns...

Read the story of 'Gigi'. Then answer the following questions.

Chapter 1: Escape

Gigi is not Marie Madeleine's real name. Her real name is Victoire and her religious name is Marie Madeleine. 'Gigi' is what she is called by her parents as a child.

How are you called? Do some people call you by a different name? Do you like your name(s)?

Gigi's family escape from their home in to hope to be safer from the French Revolution, which is targeting the nobility. Her parents are afraid, but Gigi isn't.

Can you think of a time when you and or your parents were afraid?

What helps Gigi not to be afraid?

What helps you when you are scared?

Gigi is punished when she is naughty and she is up to more mischief yet she also has a strong sense of justice. When she is presented as a thief by her grandmother, she says: "I don't mind, but it's wrong to show up people's faults in front of everyone!"

Place yourself in her grandmother's shoes. How would you have dealt with a naughty girl?

Chapter 2: On the farm

Gigi liked helping her parents, imagining she was an almost-grown-up member of the family.

Do you like helping in the household? Why or why not?

Are there times you wished you were grown up already? Why?

Despite the fact they were hiding, Gigi still received the kind of well-rounded education that was fitting for a young lady of her day. Learning all the skills necessary for running a house, learning to draw and paint, do needlework, dance and play musical instruments. What subjects do you like and don't like?

Chapter 3: Father is arrested

Gigi's mother said that she probably would not grow very tall, but that God called each one of us to great heights inside ourselves. Gigi wondered what God would call her to become.

Do you believe God has a plan for us? What do you think God is asking of you now?

Victoire's mother urges the children to pray for their father's release, but Victoire prays to be arrested too so she can be with her father.

Do you think that is a silly prayer? Why or why not?

Do you pray?

What is the point of praying?

If you pray or used to, when do you pray: time of day, regularly or mostly in good or bad times,....?

How (do you ask God for things, do you thank or praise Him, do you pray in your own words or do you use set prayers such as the Hail Mary, Our Father,...)?

Chapter 4: Victoire

Life is difficult for Gigi or Victoire as she is now called as a teenage girl. She grows up in the time of the French Revolution, her father is imprisoned, food is scarce, winters are cold and despite her noble birth she has to work hard. It's a time of uncertainty.

What do you find difficult in life?

Can you think of children growing up in different parts of the world facing hardship?

Chapter 5: Friendship

Victoire loves dancing and having fun, but she also cares deeply for others and wants to help.

What is important for you in life?

Can helping others also give you joy?

In which ways are you able to help others?

Who is your best friend and what do you have in common?

Have you ever had to say goodbye to a friend? Did you manage to stay in touch and how?

Chapter 6: Joseph and Victoire

Victoire encounters extreme happiness followed by deep sadness in a short period of time.

When were you most happy in your life? How long did it last?

When were you most sad? What helped you and what didn't?

Chapter 7: Loneliness

Victoire helps others with their worries, but who would help Victoire in her own struggle to discover what God wanted of her? Who do you turn to for help?

Chapter 8: The long search

Victoire sought the help and advice of many wise and holy priests. The trouble was, they all gave her different advice. Have you ever experienced getting different advice from different people? How do you make up your mind?

Look up who the Jesuits are.

Eventually Victoire discovered the answer. One day, while she was praying and thinking about how Jesus had died on a cross, she heard the very words which Jesus had spoken when he was on that cross: "I thirst." She heard them spoken directly to her! Jesus didn't just thirst once on a cross a long time ago. He was still thirsting now, today, for people with generous hearts, to give their lives to him.

What do you think would Jesus be thirsting for now?

Look up the FCJ Sisters on the internet.

In which countries do they live?

Give some examples of work they are involved in now.